

any stream or pool of water forms a part. In his carefully prepared "List of Trees, Shrubs, &c.," of the Jerruck division, Mr. G. K. Betham includes three species of tamarisk, one of which, the "Asri" (*Tamarix articulata*) is a tree of fair size. In some parts of Sind the tamarisk jungle gives cover to vast numbers of wild pig.

Beyond the reach of the silt-laden waters the dry and hardened ground is almost bare, and in such places the physical contrast is most striking between the landscapes of Sind and the hilly tracts of some other parts of the Bombay Presidency. My recollection of particular plants is not recent, but I have refreshed my memory from a paper I wrote only a few years after I had left Sind, and I then noted that where there was any vegetation at all the characteristic plants, in places beyond the influence of the river and the canals, were those of the desert—the "Kirar" or leafless Caper (*Capparis aphylla*)—essentially a lonely plant, but beautiful, with its countless brick-red flowers,—the "Pilu" (*Salvadora persica*) with fleshy leaves, and strings of translucent, rounded, glutinous fruit, shining like pearls—and the *Parkinsonia aculeata*, with clear, yellow, crumpled flowers, freckled with brown, and spiny branchlets, which once suggested to a great Italian painter his idea of "the Crown of Thorns." Then there is an undergrowth of Camel-thorn (*Alhagi camelorum*), which, near Kandahar and Herat, yields manna "at flowering time, after the spring rains," and is an agreeable food for camels and useful for door-tatties in the hot weather;<sup>s</sup> and of various plants of the Goose-foot tribe (*Chenopodiaceæ*), one of which, the *Sueda maritima*, yields, according to Mr. Betham, "an impure carbonate of soda, used in soap-making, calico-dyeing and washing," and is also a favourite food of the camel. And there is that curious plant, the "Panirio" (*Withania coagulans*), of the potato tribe, whose juice curdles milk into "panir" or cheese. In these arid tracts, with such strange herbage, the traveller misses the fresh, bright tints which enliven the forests of the Konkan and the western Ghâts in the early spring of March or in the second spring of the early weeks of June. The prevailing tones are sad, secondary, bluish-greens, and the same faint colours repeat themselves everywhere on uncultivated lands, and are only rarely relieved by the deep, glossy greens of the *Salvadora*. There is nothing like it in the rest of the Presidency, except in the districts nearest Sind. It is to the Flora of Africa that the indigenous vegetation of Sind is most closely allied.

#### No. XXI.—THE RUSSELL'S VIPER.

On the 14th February last, whilst encamped in the Dantra district of the Mâhi Kânthâ, I killed a Daboia (*Vipera russelli*) of such an unusually large size that perhaps it may be considered worthy of record in our Journal.

One of my servants, on rising from his midday sleep, noticed the quite fresh trail of a large snake so near to the spot where he had been lying that it must almost have touched him. On drawing the notice of my butler to the trail

\* Dr. Dietrich Brandis' "Forest Flora of North-West and Central India," p. 145.